

# Integrating the Monorail

Uptown  
Seattle Center  
Belltown

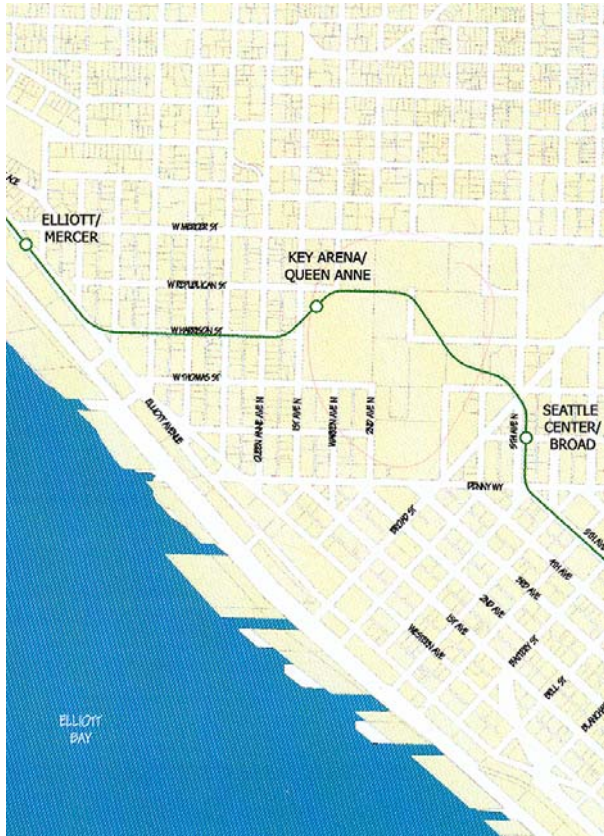
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## **DRAFT**

PLANNING  
BACKGROUND  
REPORT

JULY 6, 2003

# Uptown/Seattle Center/Belltown Overview



In November 2002, Seattle voters approved creation of a new public agency, the Seattle Monorail Project, to plan, design and build a 14-mile monorail system commonly known as the Green Line. The City of Seattle has initiated a station area planning program - *Integrating the Monorail* - to make the most of the opportunities presented by the Green Line and encourage the best fit between the monorail and its neighborhood setting.

This planning background report for *Integrating the Monorail: Uptown/Seattle Center/Belltown* summarizes existing plans and conditions in the Uptown/Seattle Center/Belltown segment of the Green Line corridor. Planning background reports for each of the Green Line corridor segments, as well as an overview of the City's station area planning program, are also available (see <http://www.seattle.gov/monorail>).

The route runs east on Harrison Street, angling north near First Avenue, arriving at a station location where the Northwest Rooms of Seattle Center are now located. Several alternative routes are being considered across Seattle Center, but the preferred route crosses the campus to the north of the International Fountain, passing near the southwest corner of Memorial Stadium, and running through the Experience Music Project building. A station at John Street and Fifth Avenue would serve both Seattle Center and the surrounding neighborhood. The route continues south on Fifth Avenue through Belltown, with a stop at Fifth Avenue and Bell Street.

This segment is covered under the Queen Anne Neighborhood Plan, the Seattle Center Master Plan, and the Belltown Neighborhood Plan. Stations near the Center will be serving both the general activities and the events at Seattle Center, as well as providing service to the Queen Anne and Belltown neighborhoods.

## Historic and Cultural Resources

Seattle Center is home to many cultural resources, including theaters and performance venues, entertainment opportunities, and open space.

Queen Anne has numerous historic buildings throughout its neighborhoods. Over a dozen buildings in Queen Anne are listed on the State or Federal Historic Register.

Both Uptown and Belltown have rich mixed-use urban streets, with a wide variety of shops, restaurants, movie theaters, offices and services. These neighborhoods have added a significant number of new residential units in recent years. The western edge of Uptown and Belltown is near the shoreline of Elliott Bay. Myrtle Edwards Park, Elliott Bay Park and the future Olympic Sculpture Park line the waterfront. However, access to these parks from Belltown and Uptown is limited by the BNSF railroad tracks.

The statue Chief Seattle at Tillicum Place (Fifth Avenue and Denny Way) has been designated a historic landmark.



## ||||| Neighborhood Plan Summary

### **Uptown Vision and Goals**

- The Uptown Urban Center is a vital mixed-use residential, commercial and employment center, with a strong relationship to Seattle Center.
- Improve access to Myrtle Edwards Park and Elliott Bay.
- Address traffic congestion and improve efficiency of local and regional transit.
- Queen Anne Bicycle Beltway for commuters and recreational users.

### **Uptown Key Activities and Current Issues**

- Multi-modal transit facility in the vicinity of Queen Anne Avenue, Mercer/Roy Streets and Key Arena.
- Uptown Character Improvement Plan, including design guidelines, streetscape guidelines and historic character conservation strategies.
- Pedestrian/bicycle connection to Myrtle Edwards Park at West Thomas Street.
- Transit connection with links to Magnolia and Interbay in the vicinity of 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue West and the Magnolia Bridge.

### **Belltown Vision and Goals**

Belltown is an eclectic and diverse neighborhood with a desire to maintain human scale architecture, a balance of commercial and residential uses with vibrant, street-level, pedestrian-oriented activities.

- Establish and maintain neighborhood design guidelines, streetscape guidebook and green street guidelines to ensure an active, vital pedestrian environment.
- Establish a circulation system that enables people to live, work, shop and play in Belltown without a car.
- Manage vehicular and transit circulation along major corridors, and mitigate traffic and transit impacts on designated green streets.
- A neighborhood in which it is safe to live, work and play; promote awareness of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design, amenities that serve youth and families, and opportunities for day/night/weekend pedestrian-oriented activities.

### **Belltown Key Activities and Current Issues**

- Complete Growing Vine Street Green Street improvements and adjoining Cottage renovation and P-patch improvements. The Cottages and P-patch are in the final stages of renovation; the Cistern Steps green street improvements are underway in phases along the westerly two blocks of Vine Street.
- Establish a Multi-Purpose Neighborhood Center; develop a neighborhood school using resources of Antioch University, Pacific Science Center, Seattle Art Institute, and other non-profit and cultural groups. The neighborhood has funding for a new Neighborhood Center at the Downunder site, to be developed by the Parks Department and Low-Income Housing Institute over the next two years, using ProParks funding.
- The neighborhood seeks to maintain adequate long-term parking for area residents and short-term parking for retail uses. The neighborhood encourages developing policies that would allow for shared use parking in existing residential structures and allow for consideration of community parking facilities for residential and retail uses.

### Seattle Center Master Plan Vision and Goals

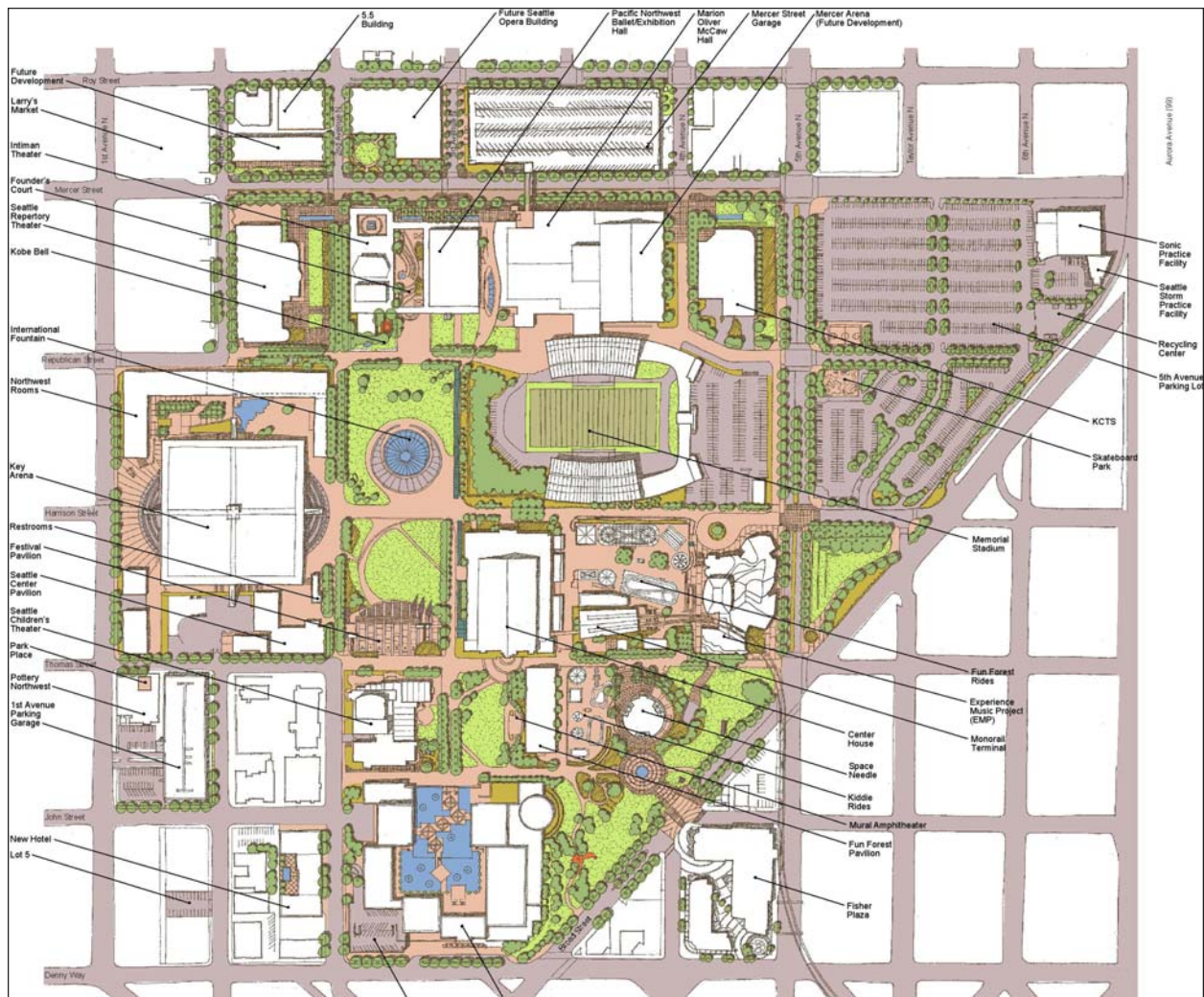
- Seattle Center considers itself to be the premier gathering place in Seattle, with many of the region's performance venues.
- The Seattle Center campus consists of a series of outdoor rooms that accommodate a wide variety of functions, from an intimate scale to major events.
- The Seattle Center campus is comprised of a series of complementary indoor and outdoor "rooms" that form an organized whole. The open spaces are the source of Center's identity, supporting a wide variety of activities ranging from quiet and contemplative to major events.
- The campus is pedestrian in nature, with vehicular circulation and parking at the periphery.
- The Center is committed to minimizing the impact of events on the surrounding neighborhoods.
- The underlying grid of streets is an organizing principle for the open spaces and pedestrian routes of the Center's campus.

### Seattle Center Key Activities and Current Issues

- Marion O. McCaw Hall, on Mercer Street, became the renovated home for the Seattle Opera and the Pacific Northwest Ballet in 2003. Fisher Pavilion was recently completed, opening up views to the International Fountain from Thomas Street and the Children's Theater.
- A concept design for the Theater District was completed in 2001, and will be implemented over time along the Mercer Street corridor, transforming the streetscape and lighting design into an attractive district that links and highlights the area as a unique collection of performance venues. Schematic design work has also been done for the portion of the Theater District between the Intiman and Repertory Theaters, as the Theater Commons.
- The Science Fiction Experience will be co-located with the Experience Music Project, and is scheduled to open in 2004.



## UPTOWN/SEATTLE CENTER/BELLTOWN | OVERVIEW



Seattle Center Master Plan

## Comprehensive Plan Goals

### *Uptown*

The Elliott Avenue West, Queen Anne, and Seattle Center monorail stops are all located within or adjacent to the Uptown Urban Center. The Urban Center boundaries encompass 297 acres, 196 of which are within monorail station areas. As an urban center, Uptown is projected to experience significant employment and housing growth over twenty years, leading to a denser mixed-use community that contains a wide range of uses.

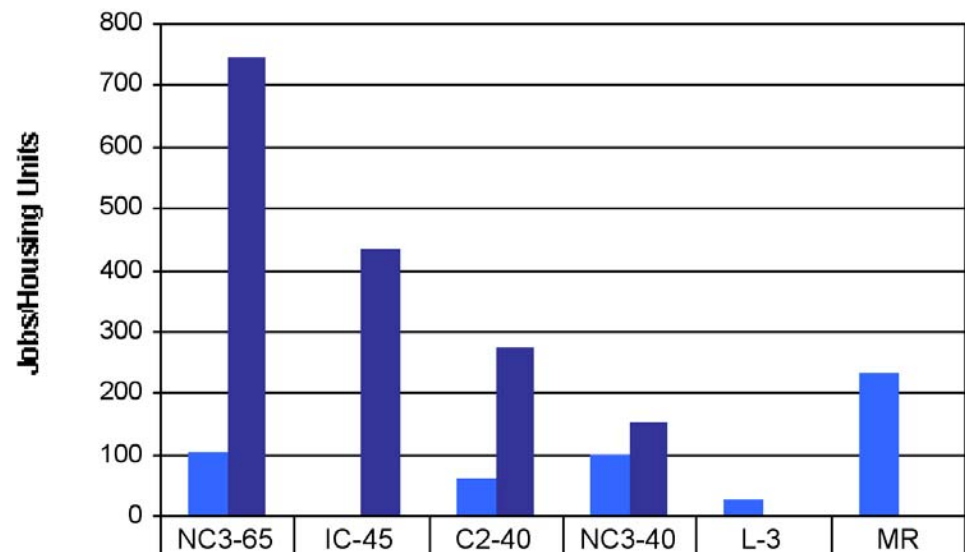
The Uptown Urban Center has met 56% of its 20-year housing growth target over the last 8 years. Between 1994 and 2003, the neighborhood saw 850 new units built, a 19% increase in housing units in the center. Housing units that currently have their building permits and are potentially under construction would increase the number of units in the center by another 4%. There are currently 190 units in the Uptown Urban Center that currently have their building permits. If all of these units are built, Uptown will meet 70% of its 20-year target.

Between 1995 and 2001, employment in Uptown fell by almost 500 jobs, a 3% decrease in employment. Over this period, job growth in education was offset by job losses in many other industries. Since 2001, the Seattle School District has moved their headquarters from Uptown to the Duwamish Manufacturing/Industrial Center; education jobs have likely decreased as well. The urban center has a 20-year job growth target of 3,300 new jobs.

The Seattle Center/Key Arena station area is almost completely encompassed by the Uptown Urban Center. Overall, the station area has capacity, if all potential development sites are redeveloped, to add 1,400 housing units and 5,850 new jobs.

The greatest opportunities for both residential and commercial development within the station area are along the mixed-use hillside southwest of the station, south of West Harrison Street, and, to a lesser extent, in the commercial areas along West Mercer

**Capacity for New Jobs and Housing by Zone:  
1/4 Mile from Elliott Avenue W and W Mercer St**

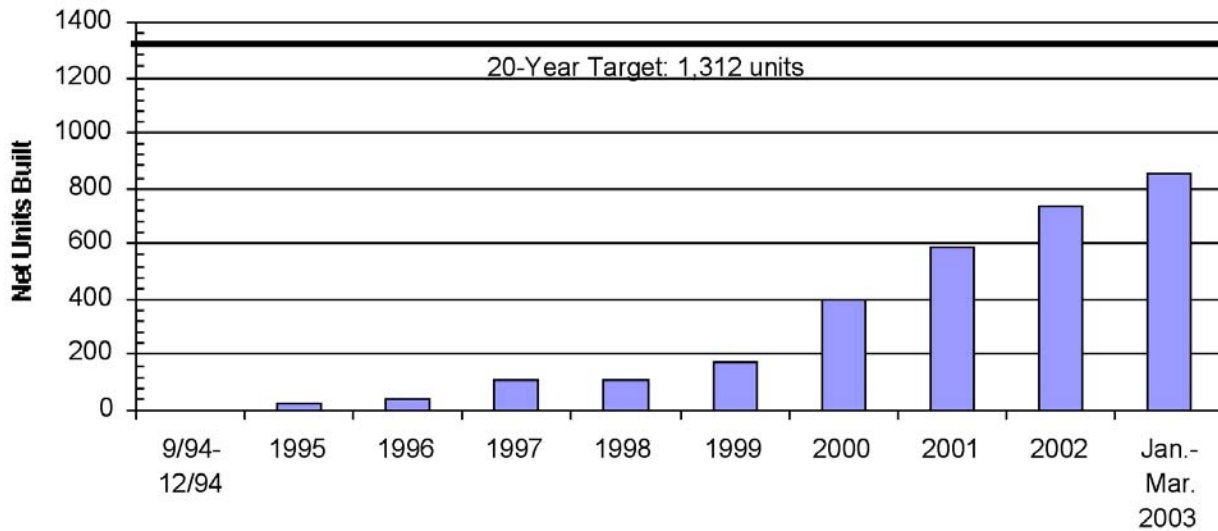


■ Residential Capacity (Units)	102		62	98	27	231
■ Employment Capacity (Jobs)	743	432	271	150		

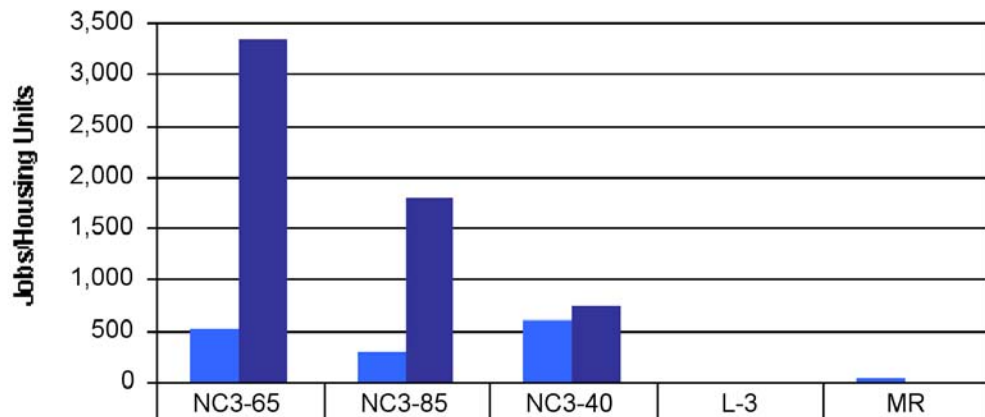
and West Roy Streets. Higher height limits south of Harrison Street permit more development in that area.

Little development is expected on the Seattle Center campus to the east of the station, an area that overlaps with the Seattle Center/Fifth Avenue and John Street station area to the southeast.

**Cumulative Housing Unit Growth toward 20-year Target  
Uptown Urban Center**



**Capacity for New Jobs and Housing:  
1/4 Mile from Key Arena**



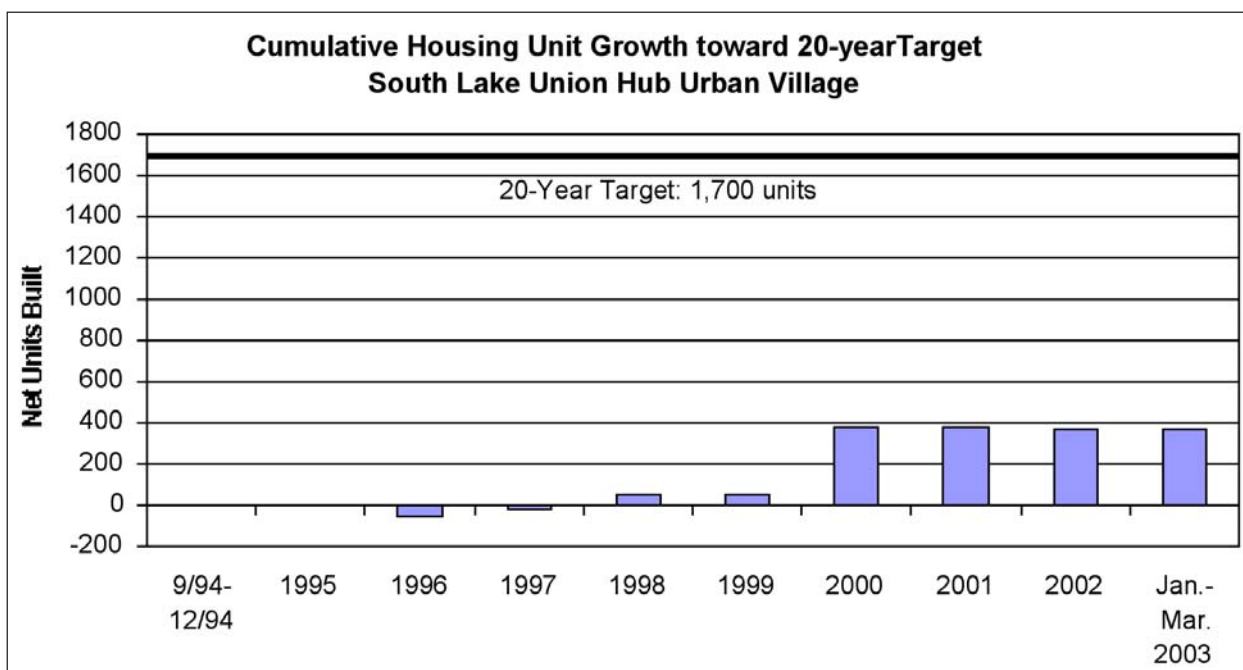
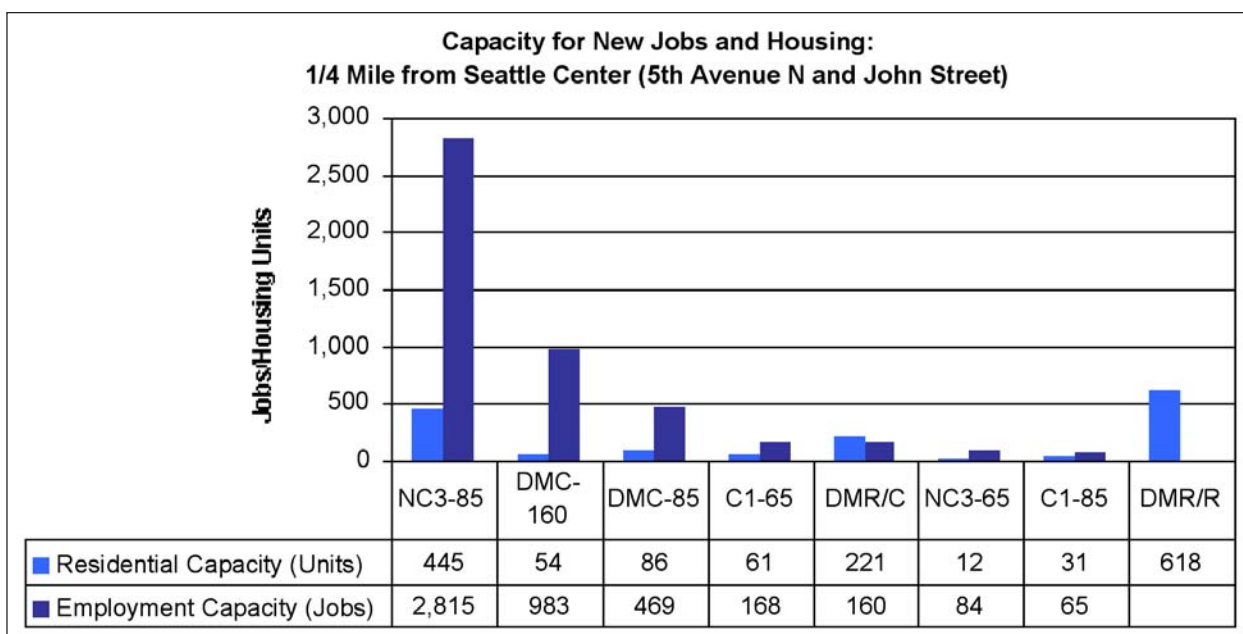
	NC3-65	NC3-85	NC3-40	L-3	MR
Residential Capacity (Units)	505	283	603	7	36
Employment Capacity (Jobs)	3,332	1,792	745		



### South Lake Union

The Seattle Center/5<sup>th</sup> & John and the 5<sup>th</sup> and Bell monorail stops are located within a quarter mile of the southwest corner South Lake Union Hub Urban Village, encompassing 13 out of the 340 acres of the urban village. The hub urban village designation is intended to support the development of South Lake Union into a mixed-use community with a range of housing and employment opportunities.

South Lake Union has met 22% of its 20-year housing growth target over the last 8 years. Between 1994 and 2003, the neighborhood saw 370 new units built, a 44% increase in housing units in the village. Housing units that currently have their building permits and are potentially under construction would double that growth, increasing the number of units in the center by another 33%. There are currently 371



units in the South Lake Union Hub Urban Village that currently have their building permits. If all of these units are built, South Lake Union will meet 44% of its 20-year target.

Between 1995 and 2001, employment growth in South Lake Union was even stronger. The number of jobs grew by 5,950 jobs – a 40% increase. Over this period, job growth was strongest in the engineering, accounting and management, business services and retail industries. Jobs were lost in the manufacturing and wholesale trade industries. The urban village had a 20-year job growth target of 4,500 new jobs, which it exceeded in six years.

#### *Belltown*

The Belltown station at 5<sup>th</sup> Ave. and Bell Street is at the edge between the Belltown and Denny Triangle Urban Center Villages and within a quarter mile of South Lake Union. As a station toward the edge of Downtown Seattle, the station area has capacity for a large amount of development. Within a quarter mile of the station, there is capacity for as many as 25,750 new jobs and 5,400 new housing units. However, this station area overlaps with those of the stations to the north and south, and some of this

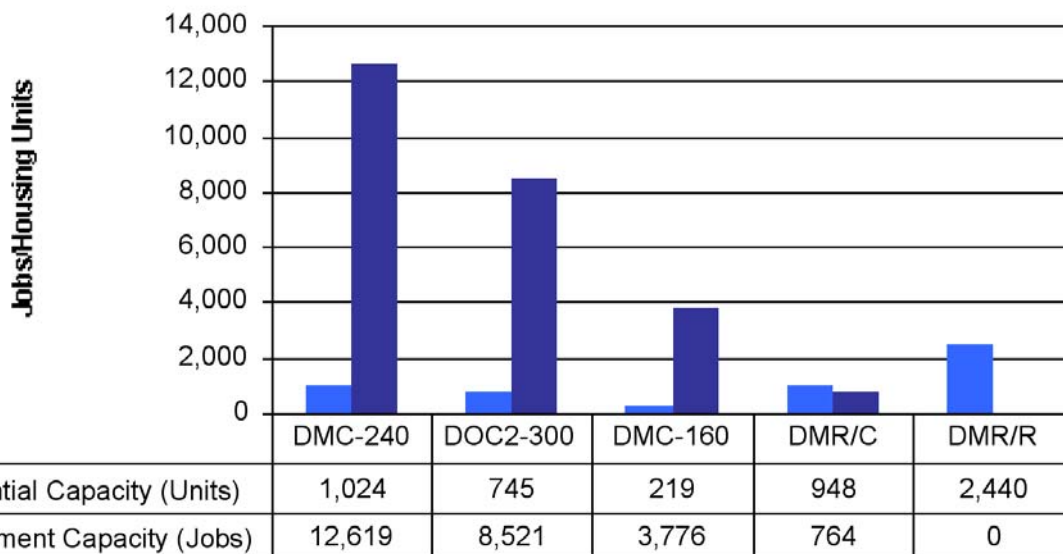
development capacity is also counted under those stations.

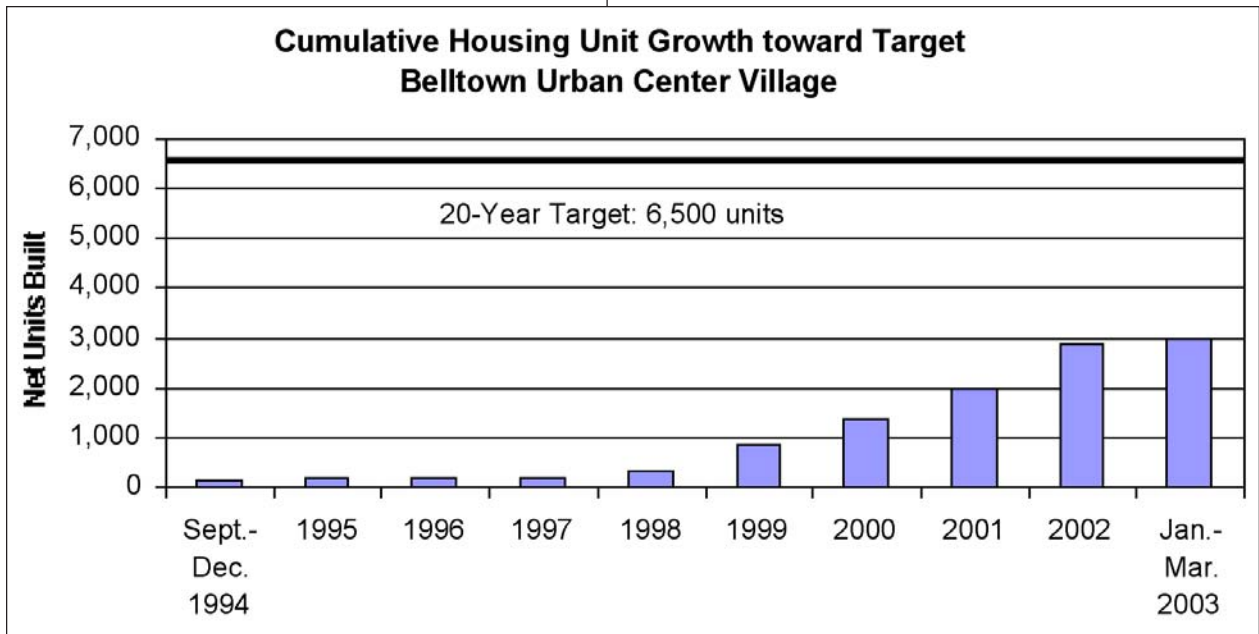
Most of the development capacity which could accommodate new jobs in this station area is located to the east of the station in the Denny Triangle's Downtown Mixed Commercial and Office Core zones. A large share of the residential development capacity in the station area is located to the west of the station in Belltown's Downtown Mixed Residential zones.

Four monorail stops would be within a quarter mile of the Belltown Urban Center Village. Together, they encompass 110 acres out of the 220 acres of the urban village. The urban center village designation is intended to support the development of Belltown into a dense primarily residential community with large multifamily structures near the employment center downtown.

Belltown has met 46% of its targeted 20-year housing growth over the last 8 years. Between 1994 and 2003, the neighborhood accommodated almost 3,000 new units, a 48% increase in housing units in the village. Housing units that currently have their

**Capacity for New Jobs and Housing:  
1/4 Mile from 5th Avenue and Bell Street**





building permits and are potentially under construction would add another 500 units, increasing the number of units in the center by another 5%. If all of these units are built, Belltown will meet just over half of its 20-year target.

Between 1995 and 2001, employment growth in Belltown was just as strong. The number of jobs in

the urban center village grew by 5,650 jobs – a 32% increase. Over this period, job growth was strongest in the business services, social services and retail industries. Jobs were lost in transportation services. The urban village had a 20-year job growth target of 4,500 new jobs, which it exceeded in six years.

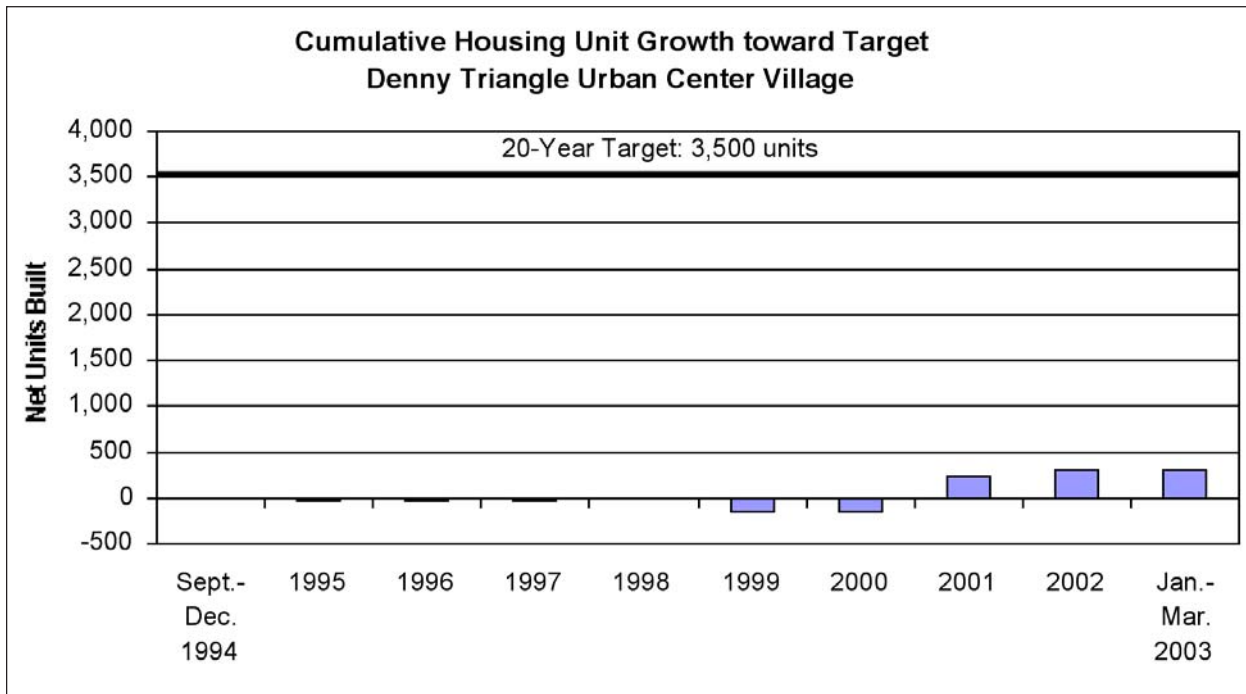
### Denny Triangle

Four monorail stops would be within a quarter mile of the Denny Triangle Urban Center Village. Together, they encompass 63 acres out of the 143 acres of the urban village. The urban center village designation is intended to support the development of Denny Triangle into a dense mixed residential and commercial Downtown community.

The Denny Triangle has met 8% of its 20-year housing growth target over the last 8 years. Between 1994 and 2003, approximately 300 new units were built in the neighborhood, a 28% increase in housing units in the village. Housing units that currently have their building permits and are potentially under

construction would add another 300 units, increasing the number of units in the center by another 22%. If all of these units are built, the Denny Triangle will meet 17% of its 20-year target.

Between 1995 and 2001, employment in the Denny Triangle grew by 3,900 jobs - a 23% increase in six years. Over this period, job growth was strongest in the communications industries, among many other industries. Jobs were lost in a number of different industries, including health Services. The urban village had a 20-year job growth target of 23,600 new jobs. It met 16% of that target in six years.





## ||||| Transportation

### Overview

- The Uptown/Seattle Center area is both a regional destination and a mixed-use neighborhood district. Mercer Street and Denny Way are links to I-5 and SR-99. Seattle Center is connected to Belltown via the downtown grid south of Denny Way.
- Over the past several years, Belltown has developed dramatically into a thriving, mixed-use neighborhood. Arterials run north and south through Belltown, and Elliott Avenue and Mercer Street form a couplet connecting to SR-99 that is used by large numbers of cars and by freight traffic from the industrial areas of Interbay and Ballard.
- Queen Anne, Seattle Center, and Belltown are well connected to the downtown retail core and government center by Metro bus service and the existing monorail.



## Vehicular Circulation

Mercer Street and Denny Way provide east-west connections between I-5, SR-99 and 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue West corridor, while providing vehicular access to Seattle Center and Uptown. When events at Seattle Center overlap with peak periods, these routes become severely congested.

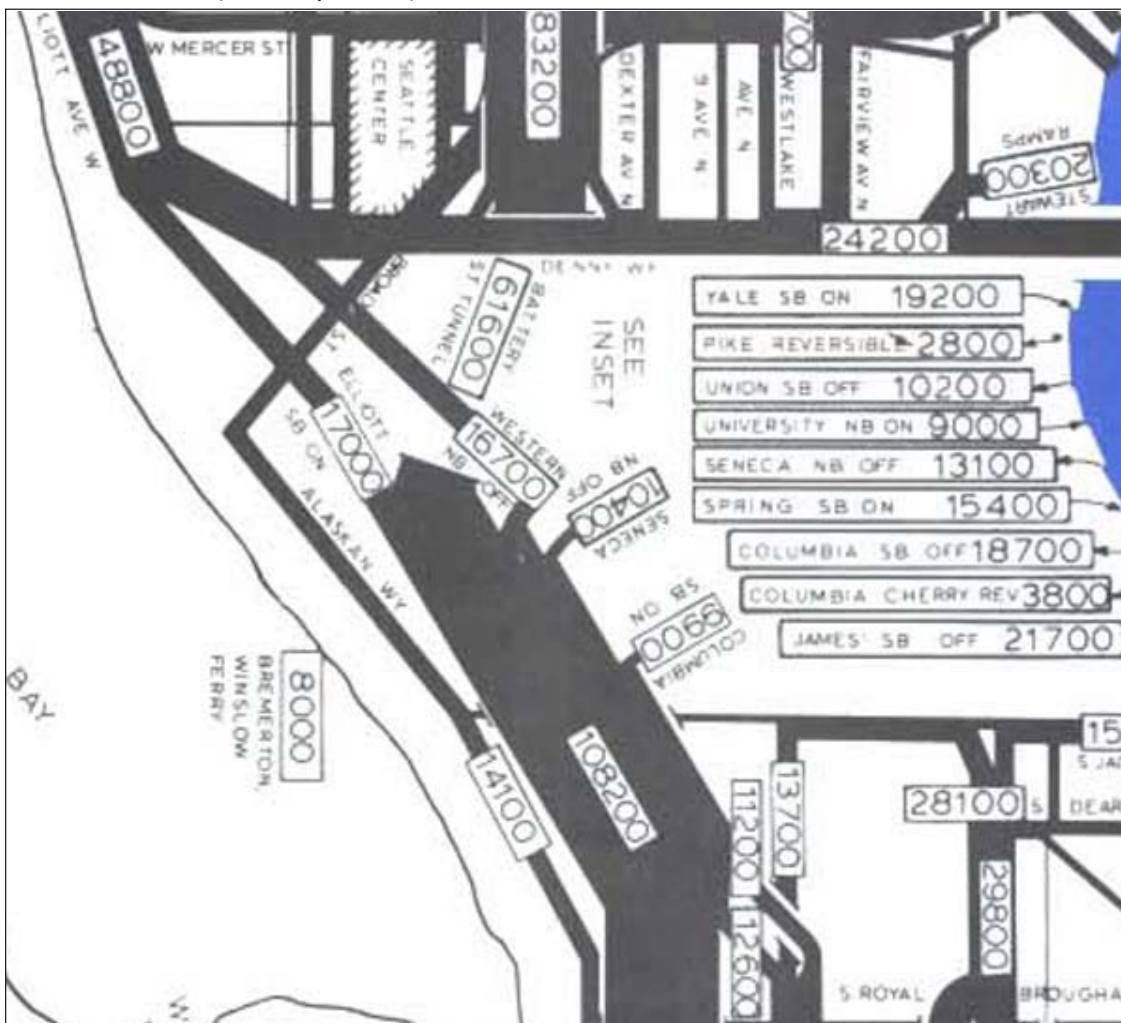
Denny Way also collects and distributes vehicular traffic to and from the downtown street network.

Within the Uptown neighborhood, Queen Anne Avenue North and First Avenue North are signalized streets operating as a one-way couplet that provide access to local business and to Seattle Center, and through access to Queen Anne Hill. West of Queen Anne Avenue North, two-way streets, controlled

primarily by stop signs in the east-west direction, provide local access to multi-family residential and commercial buildings.

The east side of Seattle Center is served by Fifth Avenue North, a two-way, signalized street that also serves as a connector between Queen Anne Hill and downtown Seattle.

Belltown's vehicular circulation is defined by north-south arterials, crossed by lower-volume east-west streets. Many of the east-west streets are "Green streets," intended to emphasize pedestrians. With signals at every other street, crossing arterials can be difficult for both vehicles and pedestrians.



Traffic flow in the Uptown/Seattle Center/Belltown area

## Street Classifications

The City's Street Classifications are intended to integrate multiple vehicular, freight and pedestrian needs, minimize modal conflicts, reflect and reinforce adjacent land use, and provide the basis for identifying and prioritizing capital improvements and operating changes.

The transit classification identifies a street's suitability for serving as a route for different levels of bus service. Parts of West Mercer Place, Queen Anne Avenue North, First Avenue North and Fifth Avenue North operate as Major Transit Streets.



Street classifications in the Uptown/Seattle Center/Belltown area

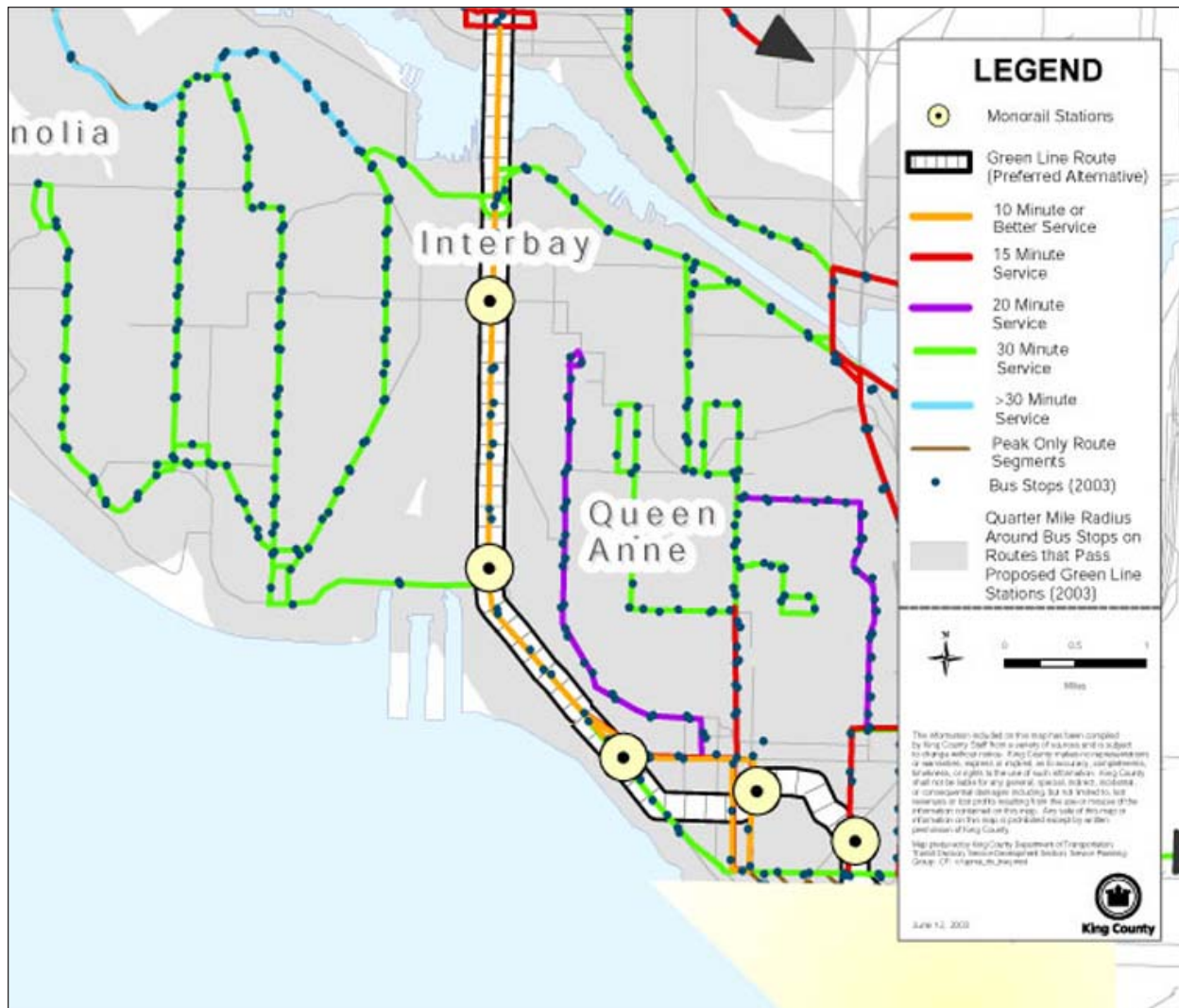
## Transit Service

The Seattle Center area is served by many Metro bus and trackless trolley routes entering the downtown area from Queen Anne Hill and various North Seattle neighborhoods. The area is also served by cross-town routes (8 and 74) to Capitol Hill, the Central District, Fremont, and the University District.

Through Uptown, primary corridors include Queen Anne Avenue North/First Avenue North to First Avenue, Queen Anne Avenue North/First Avenue North to Third Avenue, and Fifth Avenue North to Third Avenue. Service on the primary corridors is every 15 minutes or better during all hours of operation. The cross-town routes generally operate

every 30 minutes with shorter spans of service.

In Belltown, the primary Metro transit corridors include First and Third Avenues for bus and trackless trolley routes connecting downtown and Belltown to Queen Anne, and North Seattle between Aurora Avenue and Puget Sound. Service on Denny Way connects Lower Queen Anne to Capitol Hill and the Central Area via Belltown and South Lake Union. Service in the north/south corridors is every 10-15 minutes during all hours of operation; the crosstown service operates every 15-30 minutes. Some routes also operate on Second, Fourth, and Fifth Avenues.



Transit service in the Uptown/Seattle Center/Belltown area



## Pedestrian Environment

- Both the Uptown neighborhood and Belltown have thriving, walkable, pedestrian-oriented streets with sidewalks, tree-lined planting strips, marked crosswalks, and full pedestrian signals at signalized intersections.
- In Belltown, many of the east-west streets do not have signalized crossings at busy avenues, and are difficult to cross. These east-west streets are designated Green Streets.
- Funding has been approved for a pedestrian overpass over the railroad tracks at West Thomas Street and Elliott Avenue West. The City is currently studying the potential to extend this crossing over Elliott Avenue West, and the availability of grant funds for it. This crossing is a project desired by the Uptown community.



## Bicycle Network

### *Mercer/Denny Segment*

Bicycle commuters from the Queen Anne/Uptown neighborhoods use a wide variety of arterials and residential streets between Seattle Center and downtown Seattle. Second Avenue has a bicycle lane along the left travel lane, from Belltown to Pioneer Square. Bicyclists heading to or from the Dexter Avenue North bike lane often use Blanchard and Bell Streets, as well as Second, Fourth and Fifth Avenues.

There is a limited amount of bicycle racks installed on arterial streets as a part of the City's bicycle rack program in the Uptown neighborhood commercial district. Seattle Center also has bicycle racks throughout the park, with special event bike parking areas at some large events.



Bike trails through the Uptown/Seattle Center/Belltown area

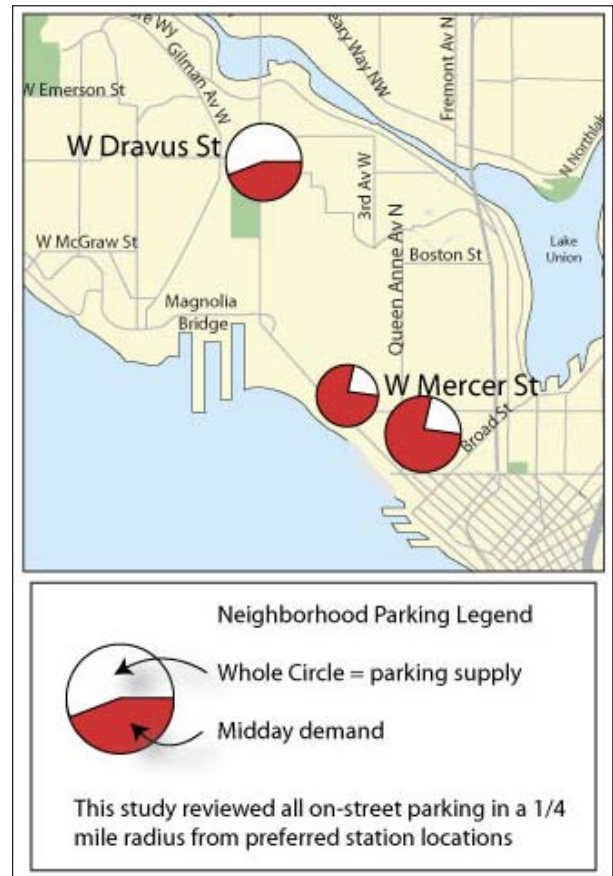


## Parking

On-street parking in the Uptown/Seattle Center segment station areas is typically restricted, with daytime parking meters in the denser commercial area, as well as posted time-limit signs in surrounding areas. The City of Seattle Comprehensive Neighborhood Parking Study, conducted in 2000, found that parkers usually have limited on-street as well as paid off-street parking available to them, although parking for residents and retail business customers can be much tighter during Seattle Supersonics basketball games at Key Arena, and other Seattle Center events.

Some of the non-residential development has on-site parking provided, although much of Uptown development was built before automobiles were as prevalent. In residential areas around the stations, residents use on-street parking heavily due to the lack of driveways or prevalence of older apartment buildings. There is a residential parking zone in the area to the north-east of Seattle Center and neighborhood residents have expressed interest to extend that RPZ west of Seattle Center and northwest up Queen Anne Hill.

For non-residential zones typically found in Uptown, parking in Neighborhood Commercial zoning is required to be located at the rear or side of a building, and built within the structure or off-site. Depending on the land use, a typical 4,000 square foot retail development would require about four parking spaces.



Parking conditions in the Uptown/Seattle Center/Belltown area